(c) The various projects, which were financed out of this fund, are briefly described below:-

(i) Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) Support for provision of Village Public Telephones (VPTs) in unconnected villages in the country.

(ii) Provision of subsidy support for provision of Rural Direct Exchange Lines (RDELs) in 1685 commercially unviable Short Distance Charging Areas (SDCAs).

(iii) Provision of subsidy support for replacement of Multi Access Radio Relay (MARR) based VPTs.

(iv) Provision of subsidy support for Rural Community phones (RCPs) in villages with population more than 2000 and where there are no Public Call Offices (PCOs).

(v) Subsidy support for the innovative scheme of Sharing of infrastructue by USO Fund to set up 7,871 number of infrastructure sites (in 500 districts) spread over 27 States for provision of mobile service in the specified rural and remote areas, where there is no existing fixed wireless or mobile coverage.

(vi) Subidy support to neraly 90.5 lakh RDELs installed prior to 01.04.2002 towards the rental differential between the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) prescribed rental and the rental charged by the service provider for a limited period of 01.04.2002 to 31.01.2004.

Death Message Post Card

†210. SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Death Message Post Card costs Rs. 6/-;

(b) if so, whether the price of these post cards widely used by middle and lover income groups is not a bit too much; and

(c) whether the Department of Post propose to reduce the price of the Death message Post Card?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) The answer is both yes and no. If the Death Message is handwritten on the Post Card, it will cost only Rs. 0.50. In case the message is printed on the card then it comes under the category of 'Post Card containing Printed Matter' and it will cost Rs. 6/-.

(b) Middle and Lower Income Groups are generally known to use only handwritten method of coveying a message. They pay only Rs. 0.50 which is absolute minimum. Only rich and well to do are known to use printed post cards who can afford to pay price which is close to its cost of operation.

(c) Do not arise in view of (a) and (b) above.

Towers of BSNL

211. SHRIMATI N. P. DURGA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry is aware that nearly 900 towers of BSNL which can provide mobile connection to 10 laks subscribers are lying idle ever after their erecting for the last one year in Andhra Pradesh;

---

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.